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**Biological Weapons Convention  
Meeting of Experts  
NGO Statements  
4-8 August 2014**



Mr Chairman:

The University of London greatly appreciates the opportunity to address this Meeting of Experts.

Yesterday, here in Geneva, King's College London in partnership with the Geneva Centre for Security Policy convened a one-day workshop on confidence and compliance with the BWC. The workshop was organised around three core questions: To what extent is the BWC verifiable? Do the CBMs build confidence? What would a legally-binding mechanism look like today? The aim of the workshop was to enable an informal exchange of views in preparation for the Eighth Review Conference. A report of the workshop will be launched at the Meeting of States Parties in December. We are grateful to the Foreign & Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom for financial support of our work.

Our statement today addresses standing agenda items 2 and 3.

**Standing Agenda Item 2: Review of Developments in Science and Technology**

On Wednesday 6 August we will be launching a report on Synthetic Biology and Biosecurity by King's College London researchers in a side-event showcasing developments in science and technology relevant to the BWC. This side-event is co-sponsored by the US National Academy of Sciences, the Royal Society, the International Union of Microbiological Societies, the Inter-Academies Panel, UNIDIR and King's College London. In addition to a presentation of our report on Synthetic Biology and Biosecurity it will also feature talks on microbial forensics and pathogenicity. You are all warmly invited to attend.

We are pleased to note that our report has proved useful to the Implementation Support Unit in its preparation of the background document for this Meeting of Experts reviewing developments in science and technology, and that it is cited as part of the key material for the newly identified trend on tacit knowledge along with a second article co-authored by a King's College London researcher.

**Standing Agenda Item 3: Strengthening National Implementation**

This is the third year that Strengthening National Implementation has been a standing agenda item and at this stage in the Intersessional Programme a clear consensus should be emerging on the way forward. Recommendations need to be agreed in good time for the Eighth Review Conference. We offer three guidelines:

1. National implementation needs strengthening in prevention as well as prohibition, in practice as well as on paper, since both prohibition and prevention are specified in the stringent requirements of Article IV. This prevention criterion must always be kept in view.

2. National implementation needs to be sufficiently transparent to build confidence in compliance, so we welcome the call for a focused discussion of what constitutes compliance and how a State Party can best demonstrate its own compliance. Such a discussion fits well within this standing agenda item, and should help shape its outcome in recommendations to the Review Conference.

3. Each State Party implements Article IV in accordance with its own constitutional processes, and each must decide for itself what method will best demonstrate its own compliance. Several have already pioneered distinct approaches, such as peer review and compliance assessment. Others should follow such examples or come up with their own alternative means of reassurance. No one is making exclusive claims for their particular approach, so it remains wide open to every State Party to choose its own way of shaping its national implementation so as to demonstrate compliance. We encourage everyone to take initiatives and, in the words of this agenda item, share best practices and experiences.

The important thing is that States Parties recognise their responsibility as treaty partners to find ways of reassuring one another that they are indeed fulfilling their treaty obligations and are seen to do so.

Strengthening National Implementation is thus integrally related to the demonstration of compliance. This standing agenda item will have enriched the Intersessional Programme if it feeds into the Review Conference a common understanding to that effect and a set of recommendations to promote this vital aspect of the BWC treaty regime.

Conclusion

Mr Chairman:

This treaty regime will soon be 40 years old. The anniversary of entry into force next March will be a good moment to recommit States Parties to the regime of biological disarmament and to plan for its reinforcement, in particular for the decisions a well-prepared Eighth Review Conference can take to remedy its weaknesses and reinforce its strengths. The BWC can count on us in the academic and scientific professions and NGOs for support, sustained over many years; but by the nature of the treaty relationship it is ultimately for its States Parties as treaty partners to make it work.

Mr Chairman, we wish you all a productive week and look forward to continuing our engagement with the Meetings of Experts and of States Parties in the service of the BWC.

**Mr Nicholas Sims**

Emeritus Reader in International Relations, London School of Economics & Political Science

**Dr Filippa Lentzos**

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\* The University of London dates from 1836, and is a major component of the higher education sector in the United Kingdom and beyond. It has evolved into a confederation of academically and financially autonomous colleges, which continue to share some central University of London institutions and a long history of joint endeavours in education and research. King's College London (founded 1829) was one of the two original colleges of the University of London. The London School of Economics & Political Science (founded 1895) became a college of the University of London in 1900.